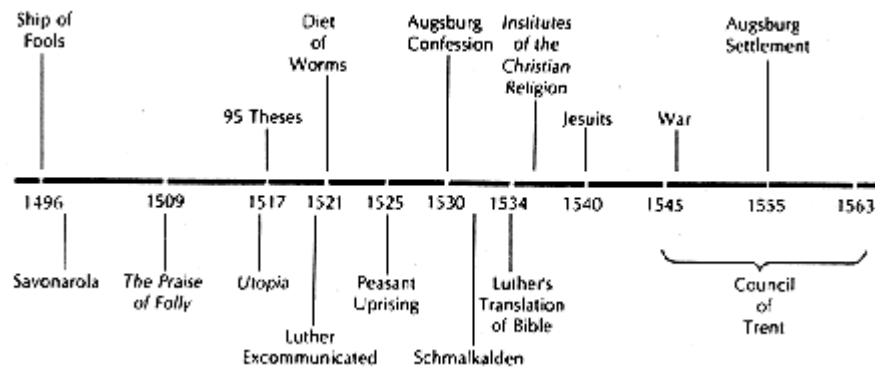


REVIEW GUIDE FOR THE REFORMATION

TIME LINE



THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION AND THE CATHOLIC COUNTER REFORMATION

The Protestant Reformation inaugurated an era of bitter and often violent religious conflict. Catholics fought against Protestants, while the Protestant groups contended against one another. While the Reformation involved primarily religious issues, it paradoxically helped to promote the growth of secularism in Western European civilization since, in Protestant lands especially, the church came increasingly under the control of the state.

LUTHERANISM

Criticism of abusive practices of the Catholic Church, such as **simony**, **nepotism**, and **pluralism**, mounted in the sixteenth century. But it was the specific practice of selling **indulgences** (sold by Tetzel), papal pardons for sins, that aroused the wrath of **Martin Luther (1483-1546)** and led to the religious split in western Christendom. In 1517, Martin Luther, a German priest, posted his **ninety-five theses**, or principles, on the church door at Wittenberg castle, near the university where he lectured. His attack centered on the doctrine that faith alone, not good works (which included the purchase of indulgences) ensured salvation. He also believed that final authority on debatable religious issues lay in the word of God, as revealed in the Bible and as interpreted by the individual. Luther's challenge to the papal hierarchy and to the Holy Roman Emperor **Charles V (1519-1556)**, fearful of disintegration of his authority within the empire, resulted in Luther's excommunication at the German Diet of Worms in 1521.

SECULAR SUPPORT OF MARTIN LUTHER

German princes such as **Frederick of Saxony**, who saw the benefit of converting to the Lutheran religion. The princes could keep the taxes flowing to Rome for their own territorial power and the church lands as well.

Townsppeople with commercial interests who felt constrained by the church's restrictions on **usury** (lending money for interest) and sought flexible business practices.

German peasants who took literally Luther's dictum that a Christian man is the most free lord of all, subject to none. The peasants wanted freedom from manorial dues and obligations. Luther, however, rejected their concept of secular liberty. He insisted that they obey the civil authorities, if not the religious ones. Society required civil obedience to avoid chaos.

The German princes who supported Luther confiscated the rich church lands and opposed Charles V. The struggle between princes and emperor resulted in the **Peace of Augsburg (1555)**, whereby the princes could determine the religion of their own territory and their subjects within it.

CALVINISM

Calvinism, the revolutionary edge of Protestantism in the second half of the sixteenth century, became the international form of the movement. It spread from Geneva, the theocracy of John Calvin (1509-1564), to France, England, Scotland under **John Knox** (1505-1572), the Netherlands, and the New World. In his tightly organized writings, known as the ***Institutes of the Christian Religion***, Calvin made explicit the notion of **predestination**, the idea that eternal salvation is determined by an omniscient, omnipotent, and inscrutable God.

PROTESTANTISM AND CAPITALISM

According to **Max Weber**, a German sociologist, Calvinism, with its concept of serving God through one's calling or vocation, helped shape the spirit of capitalism. Weber has written: "The ideal type of the capitalist entrepreneur . . . avoids ostentation and unnecessary expenditure, as well as conscious enjoyment of his power, and is embarrassed by the outward signs of the social recognition which he receives.... His manner of life is...distinguished by a certain ascetic tendency.... He gets nothing out of his wealth for himself, except the irrational sense of having done his job well."

THE CATHOLIC COUNTER-REFORMATION

In order to salvage its eroding power, the Roman Catholic Church undertook its own reform and sought countermeasures against Protestantism. The mid-century **Council of Trent** forbade the sale of **indulgences, pluralism, and simony** and insisted on strict morals, behavior, and dress of clergy. In matters of doctrine, the council insisted that salvation could be assured through faith *and* good works.

A new teaching order, the **Jesuits, led by Ignatius Loyola** (1491-1556), reaffirmed obedience to the decrees of the pope and to the hierarchy of the church. The church further sanctioned the revival of the **Inquisition**, a medieval court that tried heretics and punished the guilty. And to prevent exposure to dangerous ideas, the church provided an **index**, or list of prohibited books. Finally, in an effort to win back adherents, the church commissioned many Catholic painters to turn their talents to religious art. For example, **Caravaggio, Bernini, Rubens, and El Greco** (see Art Web Page for details on this period and style) painted religious scenes that were theatrical, sensuous, and dynamic. The classical harmony of the Renaissance gave way to the extravagance and passion of **baroque** art.

THE ENGLISH REFORMATION

In spite of efforts to check the spread of Protestantism, the Catholic Church was unsuccessful in preventing England's withdrawal from its fold. But in the case of England, the reason was personal and political rather than religious. **Henry VIII** (1509-1547) became infatuated with **Anne Boleyn**. He sought to dissolve his marriage to **Catherine of Aragon** so that he could marry Anne Boleyn. This dissolution was accomplished when he broke with the church and declared himself (**The Act of Supremacy**) the Supreme Head of Church and Clergy of England (1534). Insistent on recognition of his title, he beheaded the famous chancellor **Sir Thomas More** (1478-1535) for refusing to acknowledge publicly his supremacy.